

Yavapai County Attorney

SHEILA POLK

<http://www.yavapai.us/coatty>

Press Release #9

DATE: August 10, 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sales of Synthetic “Spice” and “Bath Salts” Banned Immediately in Yavapai County

Late Thursday, Yavapai County Superior Court Patricia A. Trebesch issued a Temporary Restraining Order banning the sale of synthetic dangerous drugs in Yavapai County by all known retailers. Judge Trebesch also scheduled a two-day hearing for the 12 named retailers and the property owners for August 16 and 17 at the Verde Valley Superior Courthouse. The order designates the sale of synthetic drugs as a public nuisance and is effective immediately.

The emergency injunction was sought by the Yavapai County Attorney’s Office. It was supported by over 100 affidavits from community members, hospitals, mental health care professionals, law enforcement officers, schools, probation officers and DEA agents detailing the harm, devastation, effects on the users and loss of life caused by these drugs.

“Bath salts,” “spice” and “novelty powders” are the street names associated with synthetic cathinones and cannabinoids, according to the complaint filed in court. These synthetic drugs are sold in small packets for \$10 to \$20 by the retailers. Although the drugs are marked “not for human consumption,” they have no legitimate purpose and are being ingested by users.

“What is so important is that parents and their children, as well as all community members, understand how dangerous and life-threatening these synthetic drugs are,” said Sheila Polk, Yavapai County Attorney. “The drugs are marketed under a variety of harmless sounding names such as ‘Potpourri,’ ‘Herbal Sachets,’ ‘Glass Cleaner,’ and ‘Tickle Talc.’ Users tell us the effects are far worse than methamphetamine. I can’t emphasize enough how perilous and addictive these drugs are.”

According to the affidavits from the hospital emergency room directors, YRMC is averaging ten patients per week under the influence of these “novelty powders.” The Cottonwood and Sedona campuses of the Verde Valley Medical Center are seeing 1 to 2 patients per day. Doctors from both hospitals describe how users under the influence experience paranoia and hallucinations, and exhibit aggressive, unpredictable and often violent behavior. Medical personnel also describe how the patients are aggressive toward the nurses and staff. In some cases, doctors have had to sedate, paralyze and intubate in order to provide medical treatment. The drugs cause dangerously high body temperatures,

raising heart rates and high blood pressure, permanent organ damage, and the psychotic effects of these drugs often last for days.

According to Polk, the Arizona legislature banned the original versions of spice and bath salts in 2011 and 2012. Because these drugs are synthetic, the manufacturers are able to quickly modify the chemical compounds to circumvent the laws. Under the Temporary Restraining Order, the named retailers are banned from selling all adaptations and analogues of the synthetic drugs.

Scientists and agents with the federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) assisted the Yavapai County Attorney's Office in seeking the injunction against the retailers. Just last month, the DEA raided laboratories across the country that are manufacturing the drugs, including sites in Phoenix. "This action demonstrates our commitment to keeping our streets safe from these and other new and emerging drugs that have decimated families, ruined lives, and caused havoc in communities across the country," said DEA Special Agent in Charge Doug Coleman. "Parents and community leaders look to us to help them protect their kids, and we have not let them down. DEA and its law enforcement partners will continue to aggressively pursue those who attempt the manufacture and sale of these dangerous chemicals."

A copy of the Temporary Restraining Order, the Complaint and Affidavits and other public documents can be found at the Yavapai County Attorney's website at <http://www.yavapai.us/coatty/press-releases/court-pleadings-bath-salt-ban/>.

The Yavapai County Attorney's Office asks that community members with information about anyone selling synthetic drugs in Yavapai County contact the office at (928) 771-3344 and ask to speak with Maggie.